



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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BAUCUS REAFFIRMS SAFETY OF U.S. BEEF

Senator Warns Trading Partners Not to Restrict U.S. Beef Imports

Washington, DC - U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, commented on today's U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announcement that an Alabama cow has tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). USDA officials noted that early tests suggest the animal was 10 years old or even older. At no time did it enter or pose any risk to the food supply.

"The safeguards and surveillance program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture worked, both to identify this animal and to determine that it posed no risk to human health," noted Senator Baucus. **"U.S. beef remains the safest and highest quality in the world."**

The United States maintains a system of interlocking safeguards designed to ensure the safety of the beef supply. The USDA has banned from the human food chain any tissues that might potentially transmit BSE. Likewise, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has imposed feed controls to prevent any possible spread of BSE.

Recognizing the safety of U.S. beef, key U.S. trading partners – including Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Philippines – recently have resumed shipments of boneless beef from cattle under 30 months. Japan, which partially lifted its ban in December 2005, again restricted shipments in January 2006 after a technical violation, which posed no risk to human health, in the U.S.-Japan import protocol.

"I trust that our trading partners will not use this news as an excuse to restrict shipments of U.S. beef," said Senator Baucus. **"International standards confirm the safety of U.S. beef from cattle less than 30 months."**

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